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Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20554

In the Matter of

Advanced Television Systems and  
Their Impact Upon the Existing  
Television Broadcast Service

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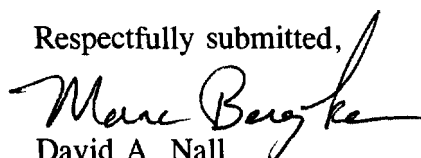
MM Docket No. 87-268

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**MOTION TO ACCEPT LATE-FILED COMMENTS  
OF THE ELECTRONIC INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION  
AND THE EIA ADVANCED TELEVISION COMMITTEE**

The Electronic Industries Association and the EIA Advanced Television Committee hereby move the Commission to accept the attached comments that respond to the Sixth Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making ("*Notice*") issued in the above-captioned proceeding on August 14, 1996. This motion is filed in reliance upon the Office of Engineering and Technology's *Order* of November 20, 1996 (DA 96-1929), allowing the late filing of comments within a reasonable time after the original November 22 filing deadline. EIA and the ATV Committee have used this additional time to study further the many technical aspects of the *Notice*.

Respectfully submitted,



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November 27, 1996

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**COMMENTS OF THE ELECTRONIC INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION  
AND THE EIA ADVANCED TELEVISION COMMITTEE**

The Electronic Industries Association ("EIA") and the EIA Advanced Television Committee ("ATV Committee") hereby comment upon the Sixth Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making ("*Notice*") that the Commission issued in the above-captioned proceeding on August 14, 1996.<sup>1</sup>

In the *Notice*, the Commission has solicited comment on its tentative plan for reallocting television broadcast channels to accommodate the advent of digital television ("DTV") and on a variety of related issues. EIA and the ATV Committee comment only on the technical underpinnings of the realloiment plan, and we recommend deferring action on the "labelling" of DTV channels. Overall, we applaud the Commission for recognizing that a principal goal of the realloiment process must be to continue to meet consumers' long-standing expectations for reliable, high-quality television service. EIA and the ATV Committee are confident that this objective will remain a focal point of the proceeding. We will, however, review others'

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<sup>1</sup> See *Advanced Television Systems and Their Impact Upon the Existing Television Broadcast Service*, Sixth Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making, MM Docket No. 87-268, FCC 96-317 (released Aug. 14, 1996).

comments with care and, if necessary, submit reply comments to address any proposals that might impair consumers' interests.<sup>2</sup>

# **I. The Technical Underpinnings of the Reallotment Plan Require Minimal Modification**

EIA and the ATV Committee are heartened by the fact that, in the *Notice*, the Commission is persevering in its dual effort to preserve universally available, free, over-the-air television and to promote the smooth, expeditious nationwide transition to DTV. EIA and the ATV Committee take no position on the specific reallotments, but commend the Commission for proposing a plan that attempts to replicate existing television service areas, while minimizing interference potential among existing NTSC and future DTV stations. As the *Notice* correctly points out, this approach serves the important goal of fostering the transition to DTV while simultaneously "preserving viewers' access to off-the-air TV service and the ability of stations to reach the audiences that they now serve."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> EIA is the principal trade association of the U.S. electronics industry. The ATV Committee is a committee formed under the auspices of EIA. Although sponsored by EIA, the Committee is not limited to EIA members. Rather, it is composed of a diverse group of organizations, including developers, manufacturers, vendors and installers of equipment used in the broadcast, cable television, satellite, telecommunications and consumer electronics industries, as well as providers of video delivery services. One of the ATV Committee's principal goals is to promote dialogue and to develop consensus on the many technical and policy questions presented by the introduction of DTV. The ATV Committee is committed to ensuring that the transition from today's NTSC environment to tomorrow's world of DTV is as seamless and inexpensive as possible for consumers. Towards this end, the ATV Committee has actively participated in each phase of this rulemaking proceeding. These comments reflect a consensus of the ATV Committee's member companies. Individual members, however, may hold different views on specific issues raised in the *Notice*.

<sup>3</sup> *Notice* ¶ 13.

To achieve this end, the Commission states that the reallocation plan's co-channel and adjacent channel interference assumptions are predicated on interference projections derived from the ATSC DTV Standard. The Standard, of course, is based on data, information and recommendations developed in the ACATS process.<sup>4</sup> EIA and the ATV Committee wholeheartedly support using the ATSC DTV Standard and the ACATS planning factors as the foundation for the reallocation plan. We have maintained throughout this proceeding that the ATSC DTV Standard is undeniably the best way to assure consumers a smooth transition to DTV. If the reallocation plan is to replicate existing television service areas as the Commission has proposed, there really is no option but to base the plan on the ATSC DTV Standard and the ACATS planning factors. It is the only rational starting point, since it represents the only thorough assessment of how the DTV transition can be accomplished without reducing consumers' access to over-the-air television service.<sup>5</sup>

It appears, however, that in developing the reallocation plan the Commission has in fact deviated from the ATSC DTV guidelines in two important respects. First, the ATSC DTV Standard (at Annex E, Section 4.1.1) and the ACATS studies assume a receiver noise figure of 10 dB in *both* the VHF and UHF environments, yet the *Notice* indicates that the reallocation plan was developed using a 5 dB noise figure for VHF signals.<sup>6</sup> The reallocation

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<sup>4</sup> *Id.* ¶ 7.

<sup>5</sup> Indeed, using the Standard as the basis for reallocation provides only further reason for the Commission to adopt the Standard. The ATSC DTV Standard is clearly the best (if not the only) means currently available for ensuring that the reallocation plan preserves consumers' access to over-the-air programming. The Commission will undermine its coverage goals if it does not require broadcasters to use this transmission standard.

<sup>6</sup> *Notice* at Appendix A, A-1.

plan should be revised to accommodate the 10 dB noise figure for both the UHF and VHF environments as had been originally contemplated.

The 10 dB figures were developed by consensus in the industry-standard setting process. Using the 5 dB VHF figure would not just contradict industry's collective view of the optimal system parameters, it would significantly constrict a parameter upon which manufacturers intend to base their equipment designs, ultimately raising the cost to the consumer of DTV receivers. EIA and the ATV Committee have stressed at each stage of this proceeding the importance of developing a mass consumer market for DTV receivers in order to hasten the transition to DTV, and the concomitant importance of affording receiver manufacturers the design flexibility necessary to fuel that development. The Commission should not inadvertently impair manufacturers' efforts by basing its reallocation plan, in part, on an unsupported VHF noise figure.

Second, we have found three discrepancies, noted in the footnote below, between some of the test results of the Advanced Television Test Center ("ATTC") and figures provided by the ATSC Technical Subgroup in its Final Report. The Commission has relied on the latter report in developing its allotment plan, yet the standard-setting process relied on the ATTC's tests. The discrepancies should thus be corrected and accounted for in the reallocation process.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The ATSC Technical Subgroup's Final Report contradicts ATTC's October 1995 "Record of Test Results on Digital HDTV Grand Alliance System" with regard to the following D/U ratios: (1) co-channel, DTV-into-NTSC, (2) adjacent channel, lower DTV-into-NTSC, and (3) taboo channel N-2, NTSC-into-DTV.

The Commission also proposes to avoid, to the extent possible, DTV allotments involving TV channels 3, 4 and 6.<sup>8</sup> The goal here is to prevent operations on channels 3 and 4 from interfering with VCRs and set-top boxes, and to prevent operations on channel 6 from interfering with certain FM radio stations. EIA and the ATV Committee endorse the Commission's proposals at least with respect to channels 3 and 4. Consumers obviously will benefit enormously if, as the nation transitions to DTV, there is no increase in the potential for interference to VCRs and set-top boxes. EIA and the ATV Committee take no position at this time with regard to the need to avoid reallocating channel 6. We look forward to assessing others' positions in their comments regarding the seriousness of this concern.

## **II. The Commission Should Await the Recommendation of ATSC Technical Subgroup 4 Before Addressing Channel Labelling Issues**

The Commission solicits comment on the appropriate channel labelling scheme for DTV stations.<sup>9</sup> In promoting the transition to DTV, the Commission should take care to minimize disruption to the existing labelling scheme, and it should seek to ensure consistency across various transmission media. For example, if the DTV labelling plan is not coordinated between broadcasters and cable operators, consumers will surely have a harder time acclimating to the DTV environment. Consumers are familiar and comfortable with the existing scheme. To head off consumer frustration and, indeed, speed the transition to DTV, any new scheme should be easy to assimilate and use.

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<sup>8</sup> Notice ¶¶ 73-74.

<sup>9</sup> *Id.* ¶¶ 33-34.

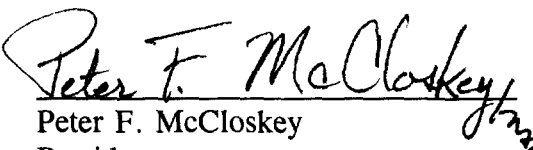
This issue is currently under discussion in ATSC's Implementation Subcommittee. This Subcommittee is comprised of representatives of the broadcasting, cable and manufacturing industries. EIA and the ATV Committee propose that the Commission defer action on the labelling issue until this inter-industry group develops and recommends a new scheme.

### III. Conclusion

For all of the reasons set forth above and in our prior filings in this proceeding, EIA and the ATV Committee urge the Commission to adopt the pro-consumer regulations necessary to promote the rapid development of DTV while preserving universal access to free, over-the-air broadcast television.

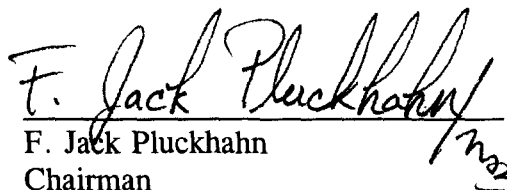
Respectfully submitted,

ELECTRONIC INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION  
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